

## **Section C-2**

### **Special Interest Topics**

The contents of this Toolkit have been developed to assist you in your efforts to support family readiness. Every effort has been made to ensure that the information provided is current and accurate. However, because statutory and regulatory changes may have occurred since the publication of this Toolkit, the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs cannot assume responsibility for its continued accuracy. Before taking any significant action based on the contents of this Toolkit, you should contact your Family Readiness Program representative or legal officer, as appropriate, to secure the most current information.

## **Special Topics**

This section contains four topics integral to military life: parent education information, relocation, handling separations, reunions and homecoming. These topics are broad and are not inclusive of the information you may need as a military family member. Use them as a reference and as a starting point. Seek additional information from your unit family readiness group (FRG) and the training opportunities provided through family readiness programs.

The military lifestyle is unique and the mission may profoundly affect the family. Your life as a family member will be easier if you have an idea of what military missions require and how they might affect you and your family. If possible, attend unit family and social functions and FRG meetings. Meet your spouse's supervisor, commander, and meet other Guard or Reserve families. The military has its own protocol, customs, and a special language (acronyms). These acronyms provide a quick, easy way of communicating, but they can also be a barrier to communication if you do not understand them. Check out the glossary of terms in this section, C-4. Ask your FRG if they have any classes in military customs and terms (acronyms). The more you understand and feel a part of your spouse's Guard or Reserve mission, the easier it will be to adapt to the separations, deployments, and relocations.

Military families often exhibit specific traits which sets them apart:

- Patriotism – the military family has a strong sense of patriotism and love of country; realizing that the welfare of the country and its citizens is a primary mission.
- Adaptability – the challenges of dual careers, mobility, employer concerns, and separation, force families to adapt to new friends, support systems, and communities.
- Resourcefulness – military families learn how to access resources, ask for assistance when necessary, be involved in their community, endure the loneliness of separation, and be self-reliant.

Capitalize on these traits by building realistic expectations of what the military can provide you, as a family member. Some families think that the military should take care of their every need during separations. Instead, the military enhances family readiness by providing resources to assist the family while fostering their independence. This way, the Guard and Reserve members, civilian employees, and family members can achieve both personal and organizational readiness. Both military and civilian community resources available to assist your family. Awareness and understanding of the resources are available and how to access them can empower you to better manage your life during times of deployments and separation.

This section, Special Topics, is not intended to be comprehensive. Instead, use it as stepping stone to learn, reflect, and seek additional resources. The emphasis of this section is on being a military child or family member. Children face many changes and emotions adapting to separations and relocations caused by the military commitment of their parent. Separations are an inherent part of a military lifestyle. Learning strategies to cope with separations are essential

for family stability. Your role as a nurturer and stabilizing force in the family is invaluable. “Reunion” and “homecoming” are uplifting words highlighting happy events. In reality, reunions and homecomings can be stressful as the roles and the dynamics of the family change.

Your spouse’s unit and FRG can be your strongest resource for information and support for parenting, employer challenges, coping with separations, and experiencing homecomings and reunions. Expand these special topics to meet your individual needs. Share your knowledge with other military families. Join together to enjoy and face the challenges of being a military family member.